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Many Must Share The Cuban Blame

As Walter Lippmann noted in his devastating article of yesterday, the Cuban blunder has reflected great discredit on almost everyone who was a party to it, from the CIA officials and the Joint Chiefs to the President and most of his foreign policy advisers.

But the indictment cannot stop with those at the top. For along with the momentous sins of commission by the planners and executors of the fiasco, there were also the sins of omission on the part of those whose function in a democracy is to inform, and to question, and to criticize.

The fact that this nation was sponsoring an invasion of Cuba was an extremely open secret weeks before the invasion attempt took place. The press reported early last month that guerrilla forces were being trained under U.S. auspices in camps here and in Central America. It was perfectly clear what they were being trained for; and it was

clear that this violated the spirit, if not the letter, of the charter of the Organization of American States which declares over our signature that "no state or group of states has the right to intervene directly or indirectly for any reason whatever in the internal or external affairs of any other state."

Yet confronted with these facts, the press did not speak out in protest, nor did those in Congress who could not have failed to see what was coming. Whether through fear of seeming unpatriotic, or through blind faith that those in charge knew what they were doing, the voices that should have been heard were silent. It was not until the venture had failed that its morality and wisdom was questioned.

This is hard to excuse. It speaks poorly for the press, and it speaks poorly for the ability of a democratic society to bring public opinion to bear against rash policies in time to prevent their execution. Such an abdication of public responsibility cannot be brushed aside by putting all the blame on the executors.